

Grantha Chillu Marker at U+1134E in Unicode SMP
Comment on Section 8.d, L2/10-167

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In L2/10-167, Section 8.d, it is stated that
"Regarding the question of a ligating virama and the "chillu marker", we note the following comments in Sharma's proposal L2/09 - 372, page 22:

*Thus we conclude that despite Grantha having these distinct forms of presenting the virama, there is no semantic difference between forms.
We also draw the UTC's attention to the unambiguous statement, appended to this document in paragraph 17, of Dr. R. Krishnamurti Shastri, well known Sanskrit scholar and chief trustee of the major Grantha publisher of Tamil Nadu, Heritage India Educational Trust, that using these "special vowelless forms" as he terms them are in no way semantically distinct from adding the "vowel absence marker" that is the virama. Hence there should be no doubt about this matter.*

Based on the above statements, we recommend the use of the GRANTHA SIGN VIRAMA and, for chillu forms, fonts (and ligature tables) be employed. That is, we recommend against encoding any chillus, chillu marker, or any special means of indicating the presence or absence of chillu forms.

If the representations are truly equivalent and there is truly no semantic difference between chillu and non - chillu representation of texts, then the rendering as chillu or conjunct is a freely variable choice that can be worked out in font software. No underlying difference in encoding is warranted. The encoding model is therefore "pure" in terms of using the virama, which fits with the "script agnostic" nature of the Sanskrit text as documented."

Chillu consonants in Grantha script – Needed for Dravidian language words (not necessarily for Sanskrit):

Chillus not creating Semantic difference may be valid for Sanskrit texts. However, that statement is *not* valid of Dravidian language texts. Please note that Grantha script is historically applied not just for Sanskrit language, but also Dravidian languages not only in India, but also in Cambodia and Thailand.

It is amply shown in the case of Malayalam, words of Dravidian, and Dravidian-Sanskrit Combinations require semantic variation by employing Chillus. For example, Malayalam needs to get transliterated properly without loss of meaning in to Grantha script. In my document requesting Chillu Mark sign for Grantha (L2-10-154), the closest script genetically with Grantha is shown to be Malayalam from 19th and 20th century descriptions of Grantha script.

Sanskrit texts do not need Nukta diacritic either. While there is no evidence of Nukta is present in Grantha script anytime, UTC has sanctioned a Nukta diacritic for purposes of

transliteration from English and other Indian scripts. Similar is the case of Dravidian five letters to transliterate from the four Dravidian scripts. Similar line of argument exists for separate Chillu mark encoding, to aid in **transliteration** of Malayalam to Grantha script (the two genetically closest scripts). Without Chillu representation by code point, we will not be able to use Dravidian word representations into Grantha script accurately.

Without coded representation of Chillus, and freely mixing regular virama with chillu virama forms, semantic differences of Dravidian languages & words will be lost in Grantha script. Hence, my request to encode Chillu mark sign in Grantha code block in SMP in order to satisfy the needs of transliteration from neighboring Dravidian languages into Grantha script. A parallel situation is present in Malayalam script where Chillus are encoded atomically to represent Dravidian and Dravidian-Sanskrit words like *vanyavanika/van-yavanika* and *kaNvalayam/kaN-valayam etc.*, where (–) represents a segment break with a preceding Chillu.

Thanks,
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